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Book

HEROD, JOHN AND JESUS ;

OR

AMERICAN SLAVERY

AND ITS

CHRISTIAN CURE.

A SERMON PREACHED IN DIVISION STREET CHURCH,
ALBANY, N. Y.

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S E R M O N .

TEXT — Mark vi, 14, 15, 16.

“And King Herod heard of Jesus (for his name was spread abroad), and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead.”

Eighteen hundred years ago, there appeared in the corrupt nation of Judea, a stern and terrible Prophet. John the Baptist appeared, crying “Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” He came preaching in the wilderness, clothed with camel’s hair and a girdle of skin about his loins, and he ate locusts and wild honey. The people of the proudest city and country on earth flocked to hear him. He preached a gospel of terror and destruction to the wicked. “Now,” he said, “the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.” He said to his hearers : “Oh, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?” For now, he said, had appeared the awful day of reckoning. The high places should be brought low, and the low places be exalted. One was coming, mightier than he, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire ; who would purge the earth and burn the chaff with unquenchable flames. He appeared to Herod the Tetrarch, who had

stolen his brother's wife ; and assailed his domestic institutions, saying: "It is not lawful for thee to have her!" There were but two things for Herod to do ; repent, or kill the Prophet. He chose the latter, and beheaded John in prison.

But now appeared another Prophet in Judea. Jesus came, saying: "Repent," but in a sense vaster than John the Baptist. He preached a gospel so much higher than the stern old martyr, that though John was the greatest prophet of the order that was passing away, the least in the new Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he. Jesus knew and valued John ; but he preached a higher form of religion. The Hebrew Prophet had only wrath for the godless ; the Christ had love for all. To the one, sinners were vipers to be exterminated ; to the other, wicked men were brothers to be regenerated. John would fly upon the tyrant Herod and overthrow him. Jesus would proclaim a gospel that would change every tyrant to a lover of his lowest serf. John's idea of the Kingdom of Heaven was an immediate, decisive battle between evil and good men, which should burn up the chaff. Jesus believed in burning out sin by converting every sinner to a saint. John's system of reformation was revolution ; war to the end. He was out of patience with the tyrant. He lost faith in Jesus because he thought him not decisive, and did not upset Herod in a day, and sent his disciples to him saying: "Art thou he who should come or look we for another?" Jesus would plant seeds of immortal truth and love in the soul and society, whose growth would displace the vile growths of evil. John had no policy, despised the name, but drove at the enemies of the Lord with the short sword of wrath. Jesus was the founder of a policy of reformation that needed ages for its majestic unfolding ; that is even now slowly regenerating the earth. John hated the sinner as he supposed God and God's Messiah must. Jesus loved all spirits ; died for all and so proved himself the Christ of God.

But how could Herod, the tyrant, steeped in blood and lust and falsehood, understand Jesus? He understood John; that he intended to put him out of the way as a monster, and killed him at once. But when the Christ of God's love appeared; the Christ that did not wish to harm one hair of the tyrant's head, only to cleanse him of his sins, and give him eternal joy and peace as a regenerate creature, Herod knew him not. To the gloomy despot the message of Jesus was only the old message of John. "Who is this of whom I hear such things?" says he, "John have I beheaded;" and then the fiends of remorse shrieked through the resounding chambers of his soul: "*It is John whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead.*" Oh, could Herod have known who Jesus was, what he wished to do for him, how the love of the Christ was seeking him and would make him a happy and holy man! But that was just what Herod could not see. He was too far gone to distinguish the messenger of wrath from the messenger of love. He saw only the ghost of John whom he had beheaded; he heard only the swift steps of the avenger; he felt only the steel of the assassin. Visions of his burning towns, revolting subjects, enemies thirsting for his blood, mingled with his dream of pomp and power. He treated Jesus as the risen John, and plotted for, and finally helped to accomplish his death.

All this is with us to-day. Herod lives in this republic, in that Slave Power which claims possession of this New World, as it has dominion over the Old. He is the implacable foe of all goodness not of the despotic type; and will trample out all civilization that cannot be subdued to his own relentless pattern. The old prophet is here; John Brown beheaded for doing what Moses and Joshua and David did; what Isaiah and Jeremiah and John the Baptist preached. The Slave Power has just killed the best specimen of the old Hebrew fighting Prophet that ever was born on American soil. Our John saw our Herod, and knew him for God's foe, and flung his sword in his face; and Herod was able to do

nothing better than make a great state holiday and take his life.

Jesus is also here; not altogether in any man, in any church, in any state of this Union, but in that spirit of regeneration which cries aloud through all our borders: "Repent!" Christ in America is that wondrous spirit of love and liberty, which rebukes men everywhere for every wicked thing they do; which is toiling to save every sinner; which curses no man, but has a blessing alike for Virginia, red with the Prophet's blood, and the Prophet himself red with the blood of those he counted the enemies of God; which says to the Slave Power: "Depart ye, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels;" but to the slaveholder and the slave: "Come to me, and I will save you both from this demoniacal oppression; reconcile you to each other; teach you bondman to forgive your persecutor, and you tyrant to emancipate your victim." Christ, the regenerating love and freedom of God is here, slowly changing every American Institution, and converting our half barbarian society to the true civilization, where all men are equal in right to become what God has made them capable of becoming.

As I have looked over the events of the last few months, I have seen again this old drama of Herod, John and Jesus. I have seen irresponsible despotism trampling down Humanity, rising up from its daily feast of blood and falsehood, and lust, to hold a carnival against the fierce prophet that would slay it in its sins; shuddering at every leaf that stirred through the land; evermore crying out in its sleep: "It is John," and raging against the wisest and best of the country, like a demon. And I have seen Jesus calmly submitting to be called a devil, bearing his cross of patient crucifixion, but none the less irresistibly saving us all. Let us take this old Bible story and learn how good it is for to-day. Let us understand, 1st. *What Herod is doing and proposes to do in America*; 2d. *What John is doing and will yet do*; 3d. *What Jesus the*

Christ is doing and will do till this Republic becomes the Kingdom of God.

First: What is Herod doing, and what does he propose to do in America?

Herod is the type of irresponsible despotism. Every nation is sooner or later threatened by the tyranny that consists in the subjugation and use of the weak by the strong for their own pleasure. A majority of the governments of the world have been and still are only the few oppressing the many, under forms of society invented to perpetuate the original wrong. Our republic, like every previous republic, is menaced by this foe to human nature—irresponsible despotism. Though partially seen in all directions, this tyranny culminates in the Slave Power of this Union, and with that institution as a lever seeks to upset the whole fabric of our national freedom.

Our American Herod is the enslavement of four million colored laboring men and women by three hundred and fifty thousand white men and women. This white aristocracy has reduced the slave race to the condition of property by the annihilation of almost every natural right that separates humanity from the brutes. The slave has no legal property, no lawful marriage, no independent possession of himself. He is said to belong to the master whose property he is; and as the laws by which he is seemingly protected are made by the master, the power is virtually irresponsible. This aristocracy of three hundred and fifty thousand slave owners thus holds a vast population in complete slavery. It has possession through its wealth, concentration and hereditary prestige of the whole social system in the slave states. Through political privileges, by itself forced into the national Constitution, and by its unity of interest, it has hitherto managed to hold and administer the government of the United States, and greatly to embarrass the development of free society in the whole country.

American Slavery is a military despotism perpetuating itself through the forms of law. Every enormity and crime that

belongs to irresponsible tyranny, is exhibited in its past history and present state. It began in the invasion of an unoffending people, and their subjugation by sword, fire and chains; a war of invasion, compared with which John Brown's foray was an Indian-summer day's pastime. From the hour when the first shipload of negroes was bought in Virginia, it has been a relentless armed possession of the conquered race. It began in the Old Dominion with a code of slave laws so barbarous that they were a scandal to human nature, fit precursor of Modern Virginia Justice. Old Gov. Berkley, raged against the printing press and free speech in that colony, very much as the dignitaries of that state now rave against "incendiary publications." The Slave Power entrenched itself in its present citadel before the organization of the government. It forced itself into the Constitution of the United States by the same kind of threats with which it now holds the nation under its intolerant rule. Driven from seven states of the North, it seized nine others, far more extensive, fertile and better situated for its purposes. It resisted the repeal of the slave trade as long as it could, and then continued it in defiance of law, and has now practically re-established it. It wrenched Missouri from Freedom in 1820, by threats that were as treasonable as John Brown's carpet bag constitution. It drove the country into war with a neighboring power; conquered Texas, New Mexico and Utah, a territory fifteen times the size of New York, and doomed it all to Slavery; and threatened to dissolve the Union, because it could not thus curse California, another vast province, three times as large as New York, on the Pacific. It broke the most solemn compact ever made between the North and the South, to subdue Kansas—another empire three times the size of our state, to itself. It invaded Kansas with the sword, and it did not hide its constitution in a carpet bag; but took it out and put it on the people; and by the help of arms, stolen from a United States arsenal, fastened a slave government upon that territory, under which

she yet groans. It slew more than a hundred men in that territory, and wasted tens of thousands of property. It has now proclaimed, by its courts, that more than 1,000,000 square miles, including all the territory of the United States, is slave territory ; and is about to assert its right, by the same court, of carrying slaves through every free state. It has practically re-established the slave trade, and by the connivance of the government, sends out its armed hordes to threaten neighboring states with whom we are at peace. It is openly proposing to subvert the constitution of our country, and change the United States from a republic to an oligarchy, in which the Slave Power shall rule by force and fraud, as surely as any aristocracy ever governed a subjugated people.

From the beginning, American Slavery has been practically the rule of the sword. It governs its slaves by a police and code, the most barbarous that exists in the civilized earth. It suppresses every class that can disturb its possession ; either by social oppression, as the poor white, or by banishment and plunder, as the free black. It denies the constitutional right of protection to any citizen of the United States, supposed to be dangerous to itself ; and by the mob, the duel, the recreant court, defies all attempt to maintain the privileges of American freemen on slave soil. It claims the right to rob the United States mail, and insults the government at every turn. Through the hands of its parasites, it has slain scores of men on free soil, for no other crime than liberty. From the day when it shot Lovejoy, in Illinois, for the crime of free printing, to the present hour, its whole career has been one of unbridled insolence. It has half killed one Senator on the floor of Congress, and has just shot another in California ; and has threatened every eminent statesman and philanthropist of the United States with death. Who shall draw up this dreadful record of blood, and show the names of its victims, murdered under the lash, burned at the stake, hunted with dogs and guns ; women violated, men shot and scourged ? The history of these enormities, within

the last fifty years, would appall the civilized world, could it be gathered in one book. And now it has crowned its infamy by hanging a man on the charge of treason and murder, each of which it has committed over and over again.

And this is the bloody despotism, that now howls through the land, against the noblest and purest men and women in America; calling them "Traitors," "Agitators," "Infidels;" setting up its pettifogging lawyers to accuse them of treason and its base journalists to offer a price for their life, and its clergy to read them out of the church; plotting to get eminent northern men before its courts, to be slain by a jury or without a jury; accusing us of sedition, and arming itself, not to resist us who never invaded it, but to subdue us into compliance with its demands. Treason! Why, the Slave Power, for the last forty years, has been organized treason against the existence of a republican government. Agitation! Why, the country has rocked to and fro, from the first day of its existence, with the struggles of this despotism for dominion. Murder! Summon the ghosts of the victims of Slavery, and let them tell the tale! Violence! Who has filled the land with mobs against free speech and liberty? Who, in 1856, forbade the people of fifteen states from voting for one presidential candidate, on peril of death? What power is now threatening on the floor of Congress to dissolve the Union, if a President of a hostile party is elected?

Is it strange, in view of these crimes, that the Slave Power thus boldly accuses freedom of all mischievous and base things? It is the old trick of despotism. Just as Francis Joseph and Pope Pius stigmatize the freemen of Europe as "Heretics," "Traitors," "Enemies of God and social order," so does our oligarchy maintain its rank among the world's oppressors, by persistent calumny of all the friends of liberty. The Slave Power is the great liar of the western continent. It perverts history, poisons character, breaks faith, plots and undermines, bribes and circumvents here, just as every tyrant does abroad—just as despotism always

has done since Cain killed his brother, and lied to God about the evil deed. Thus while itself "the sum of all villainies," the Slave Power lives by charging all the crimes of the decalogue on the freemen of the land.

Do not think I am unjust to our brethren of the slave regions of this country. The Slave Power is not the South. It is a great landed aristocracy of 350,000 people, located at the South; owning one-third the real estate of that region, 213,000,000 acres, and wielding a capital, in land and slaves, of two and a half billions of dollars. This southern aristocracy is in alliance with a corrupt commercial class in the great cities of the Northern States and the British Empire. New York, Liverpool and Manchester are as much the seat of the Slave Power as the cotton fields of South Carolina; Cincinnati and Philadelphia as surely as the rice swamps of Georgia and the sugar estates of Louisiana. The Slave Power always assumes to speak for the south; just as despotism always overlooks the people. But there are 331,000,000 acres of land, and seven millions of white people, in the Slave States, that are not of the Slave Power, though now held in subjection by it. This oligarchy, a smaller number of people than now inhabit the city of New York, rules this Republic; just as a few thousand kings, generals and noblemen oppress the great empires of Europe. The Slave Power is the despotic tendency of the country concentrating about and buttressing the slaveholders. Thus, every man, in Church and State, who wants to play the tyrant, finds himself in natural affinity with it. The south is full of noble men and women who groan under its yoke.

We may wonder why men, who are often amiable and respected in private life, should lend themselves to such enormities as are daily committed by the Slave Power; but it is the law of human affairs, that every despotism finally assails not a class, but human nature. There is a dreadful logic in tyranny that drives its supporters from point to point to the last result of crime and blasphemy. The Slave Power set out

with denying human rights to the negro; but it has found that the negro, being a man, is tied to every other race and every sacred interest. To keep him down it must keep everybody else down, and crush freedom everywhere. Herod began with the desire to play the king; he was driven from crime to crime, till he stole his brother's wife, beheaded John and helped to crucify Jesus. When the Slave Power declares a negro no man, it declares you and me no better than a negro if we stand in its way. It would kill a Senator of Massachusetts, a President of the United States, as quick as a runaway slave, if either really blocked its path. It would forbid the white children of Ohio to read as soon as the negro children in Mississippi, if this were necessary to secure its power. It would proclaim martial law in New York and fill the cars of the Central Railroad with soldiers as soon as in Virginia, if New York threatened to abolish it. Though good men are often found in a dominant aristocracy, despotism never yet stopped at any enormity. It swallowed the massacres of Rome, the horrors of a St. Bartholomew's day, the slaughters and confiscations of Napoleon. It is capable, in America, of all it ever has been, or now is capable elsewhere. It is as determined to put out Liberty here as in Austria. Despotism and Freedom are foes from eternity, and to all eternities to come. One must die: the only question in America is—which shall subside, the Slave Power or Freedom? The “irrepressible conflict,” of which so much is now said, is not a conflict between the people of the different sections of this republic, but a duel between the two opposing forces in the republic, from which only one will come out alive. I have no doubt which party will be left on the field. I believe the Slave Power is to be broken down within half a century, and Freedom become the law in America.

How shall that be done? Shall John or Jesus abolish Herod? How does each propose to destroy him?

Second: What does John propose to do with Herod?

John the Baptist is the type of that old Hebrew Religion that would regenerate the world by cutting of and destroying the wicked men in it. It believes in a God of implacable justice, who "lays the axe at the root of the trees and hews down and casts into the fire every tree that beareth not fruit." It identifies the sin and the sinner. It looks at a great wicked institution, and summons it in the name of God to subside. If it does not subside it draws the sword and in the name of God rushes to destroy all who uphold it, from the face of the earth. That old Hebrew way of disposing of sin has its representative to-day in America. John Brown was its perfect incarnation. John Brown feared God and hated evil as fiercely as any hero of that old day. He was brave, just and humane to the full extent of his principle; indeed there was in him somewhat of tenderness caught from a higher faith than his own. But just as firm and true and pure as he was in his personal character, just so terribly did he hate Slavery, the sum of all villainies. He saw it was the worst sin on the continent; the end of wrong to man and blasphemy against God; and his soul burned like a slow fire a quarter of a century to exterminate it at one blow. He waited with wonderful patience and prudence till the Slave Power drew the sword against freedom in Kansas. Then he flew to the fight hoping the hour had come. His counsel was rejected; but he still fought on his own responsibility, and having once unsheathed his steel, threw away the scabbard. He finally believed the day had appeared. With a lack of his usual prudence he trusted the representations of his associates, that the bondmen were ready for revolt. In full confidence in that he seized the chief strategical point of the oldest slave state, and flung defiance in the face of despotism in the citadel of her power.

He was deceived and overpowered, and has died as he lived; taking nothing back; warring with the tongue and pen when his rifle was wrenched away. He looked the despotism of the new world full in the eye with a glance of defiance that burned

to the soul of the Old Dominion. He repelled the religion of his enemy, saying: "I would rather a dozen slave children and a good old slave mother would ask God's blessing on me, than all the clergy in Virginia." He mounted his scaffold with the step of a monarch ascending his throne, and bid good-bye to his executioners as cheerfully as if he were going to a feast. What shall we call him but the best incarnation of the old Hebrew gospel of God's wrath against sinners that ever trod the soil of this new world. Just as Joshua swept the heathen to destruction; just as Isaiah stormed hail stones and fire against the wicked; just as Cromwell bent a King's neck under the axe; just as the Puritan slew the Pagan savages; just as Havelock sent the Sepoys to Hell to the music of prayers and sacred songs;—did this man—not in a spirit of revenge, but in the spirit of the old gospel of destruction—stamp his foot at Harper's Ferry and send Virginia into an ague that all the political and ecclesiastical quinine of her despotic governors and slave-driving priests cannot lay to rest.

There was a great truth in this way of dealing with sin in the days of Moses and David. The Hebrews were one little people which represented the true God in the world, and all the rest a wilderness of heathendom. The only question in Judea was, which party should survive. Joshua said, "choose this day whom you will serve," and sent the heathen to Hades. There has always been a great truth in this mode of purification where Christianity has not prevailed. It is the only method where there is no power of Christian sentiment and institutions to work with. For the worst thing that can happen to any nation is to be altogether enslaved; nothing is so bad as that. The next better thing is to destroy that despotism by killing the despots; that is the Hebrew way; "God, the consuming fire." The best way is to destroy despotism by converting the despot to freedom and saving the oppressor and the oppressed together, as Russia is now emancipating her slaves. That is Christ's way. Jesus said to

Peter when he drew his sword to defend him, "Put up thy sword;" not because Jesus was a coward, but because his word was a sword so much sharper than Peter's, that it would separate the wicked from their sin, and save the world from Satan. John Brown's way was infinitely better than to submit forever to perfect subjugation by the Slave Power. But as Jesus said, "The least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist," the greatest prophet of the old faith; so we must say, even while our souls are thrilling with this old hero's sublime fanaticism: "There is a better way than yours, John, and we trust the day is past when your sword can save us."

For, if as certain fiery reformers and thundering preachers say, John Brown is the true leader of this crisis; then we are all bound to avenge his death, and wash out that gallows in the blood of the State that reared it. Then the North must devote her gigantic wealth, her terrific energy, her indomitable courage, to a mighty crusade on the South, and slay and burn till the slave is free and safe from his oppressor. And that is a civil war of eighteen millions of white people against eight millions of their white brethren, with four millions of black slaves waiting the hour to make it such a servile war as never yet was seen. Let such preachers and agitators look down into this hell, and tell us if they are prepared to whet the sword for such a harvest of death. If we were a nation of heathens or old Jews, and knew no better way, even that would be better than the slavery of 30,000,000 to 350,000. If we should lose Christianity out of America, so that we all run down into heathen or old Hebrews, that would be the only way left for us. But whoever says this of America, I declare it a libel on our civilization; and a counsel of madness and folly to preach insurrection and invasion, as a cure for our national ills.

I do not doubt that the Slave Power will force its subjects into more than one insurrection, before its rod is broken. I cannot be sure that this horrible iniquity may not yet go out

in the blood of our fellow-countrymen. I feel the accumulated peril of every year's delay in the settlement of this formidable controversy between justice and oppression. But while I cannot change the laws of History, and must bow to God's most terrible retributions, I must ask myself: "What is my duty as a teacher of Christianity in such a crisis as the present?" Shall I declare that the sword is the only way left to us to solve this dreadful problem? I am not a non-resistant, and believe Christianity permits man to defend himself or society to protect itself by force in the last extremity of peril to life or liberty. But shall I say that last extremity is upon our country, so that insurrection and invasion are the only remedy for our ills? When I look over this great North with its growing conviction against slavery, and behold what wonders have been wrought among us since my own boyhood, I am not prepared to repudiate Christ's Gospel of peaceful regeneration, and fall back on the Gospel of armed revolution as a cure for anything in this country. Indeed, it seems to me a shameful abuse of the vast natural supremacy of the North to crush out in blood a state of society that with patience and fidelity, can yet be redeemed to liberty.

I believe also such method of operation would be clumsy and impolitic. We want to destroy the Slave Power; and that is equally located in North and South. A vast majority of the southern people are not its supporters, but its subjects; and this method would involve millions of non-slaveholding whites in all the horrors of a bloody war, and destroy those who are on our side.

But could we gather the three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders into one army, and guard against every contingency of harm to the slave or non-slaveholding white, it would be wicked beyond expression, under present circumstances, to make war upon them. For the slaveholders are men—such as we should be under their temptation. If we are better than they in this respect it is because God has given us a better education in civilization. They are our brethren and

sisters. God loves them as truly as the black man. We want to save them—recall them from their “wild and guilty fantasy,” and consecrate the admirable power and ability they now devote to despotism, to the establishment of a Christian republic. Never, while one hope remains of saving our country together to God and humanity by Christian influences, should we draw the sword on them. If Satan should so far get the upper hand that the only alternative were slavery of the whole or the destruction of the despots, there would be less doubt what we ought to do. But that day has not come—will never come, if we perform our duty as Christian citizens of the republic.

Third: What does Jesus propose to do with Herod?

Jesus, the Christ, would destroy sin by regenerating the sinner and saving all concerned in it from the power of the Devil. He is the source and symbol of those great spiritual ideas and forces which, silently or actively, forever shape the destinies of mankind. Physical force is the ready weapon of man in his sensual and barbarous condition, and every savage people seems condemned to hew its way to civilization by the sword. Christianity pronounces war, even in the best cause and the last resort, a degrading remedy for any wrong, and repudiates it while spiritual methods have the most distant hope of success. And it always exalts these forces to the highest place in her estimation and insists that men shall exhaust every resource of just private and public influence and policy before they oppose force to force. Nothing but the imperative necessity of self-preservation can excuse society from using the military arm in defense or assertion of liberty and order; and Christ would lead every nation to that point where an enlightened and religious public sentiment would be the only police, and righteous laws be obeyed and evil decrees be spurned by an irresistible opinion of the people. Until that time, Christ, in every community, is the Spiritual Force of truth and love extirpating all error and sin by regenerating the ignorant and vile, as opposed to the power of physical

force enlisted for the same ends. His best representative in America is that true church consisting of all souls who believe and live out the "liberty wherewith he has made them free." Whoever truly loves God and man is a Christian; and every Christian hates Slavery as he hates hell, and in the spirit of love to all men devotes his life to its extirpation.

This spirit of Christian freedom has already done mighty things in our nation. It has created eighteen free commonwealths, spite of their faults, the noblest new states the world ever yet beheld. It is now going on to raise those free states up to the standard of Christian public and private morality. It has looked at American despotism fastened upon fifteen slave states, and long ago pronounced its final doom. And now in the slow, sure way in which God works when he would lift up a nation to enduring might, it is elaborating its policy and beginning its toil. That plan is not now the platform of any party, but is to become more and more the creed of all parties, churches, states and society itself. Let me, not as a statesman, which I do not claim to be, not as speaking for any sect or party, for I belong to none of them, but as a free Christian minister, a free member of the Church Universal, a citizen of the United States, set forth this policy, as it looks from my pulpit.

The end proposed by the Christian sentiment of freedom is to save the American Union from Slavery, and make it the great controlling power of constitutional liberty on the Western Continent; the noblest ambition that ever yet fired the soul of any community. In that Union a majority of states, and an overwhelming majority of wealth, numbers and power of every kind is nominally on the side of liberty, though now paralyzed by imperfect knowledge and low ideas of man; while the minority, by concentration and fanatical belief in despotism, rules the whole country. God has cast our lot as citizens of this American Union, and set before us the mission of redeeming it from the American form of despotism. We shall gain nothing by attempting to repudiate our

social and civil relationship to that confederacy and feigning to ignore any of the duties or methods resulting therefrom. A Christian in the United States is not a disembodied spirit of light, criticising the country ; but a citizen of a government, spite of its faults, the best on earth, and a nation nearer its deliverance into a true civilization than any people of ancient or modern times. His peculiar duty is to apply the Godlike sentiment of love and liberty in every relation of his private and public life ; doing all he has the power to accomplish, and striving to leave his posterity on higher ground than he now occupies. I speak of this progress of freedom as the work of Christianity ; for I have no faith in anything but the religious reverence for man as God's immortal child, to lift this nation out of its present barbarisms. The lower nature of every man is a tyrant ; in America, a slaveholder and negro hater ; and all parties or policies emanating from that lower region of humanity, will miserably fail to elevate the down-trodden races of our land. The progress of true religion will mark the growth of an effective Anti-Slavery sentiment. This, of course, is a vast and gradual enterprise, offering the most illustrious missionary field on earth to the faithful soldier of that religion whose founder died for the spiritual rights of mankind. In reaching forward to this glorious consummation, the Christian sentiment of America must proceed somewhat in the path I now imperfectly delineate.

First. There must be a great education of the masses of the people of the north and south, into faith in freedom and the true destiny of the republic. Not so much agitation as education ; the dissemination of facts and arguments ; the calm, forcible, persistent appeal to the reason and conscience of the people, is what we want. Every neighborhood should be flooded with documents, showing forth in plain, practical terms, the inhumanity, bad policy, folly of Slavery.* An

* Among the best of such documents, is the "Compendium of the Impending Crisis," by Mr. Helper. It is shown to be best, by the fact that the Slave

army of trained lecturers should perambulate the country, not denouncing the southern people, but exposing Slavery at all points, and arousing the land in a great revival of sentiment and conviction. We have only yet begun this work. The people are still grossly ignorant of the real merits of this great controversy. Let every man in his place, every journal, every orator, spread the truth and arouse the conscience through all our borders.

Then use this awakened sentiment, to weed despotism out of northern institutions, and concentrate them all against the Slave Power.

Let the church purify herself of complicity with Slavery ; the free Christians in it giving themselves no rest till those who are in bonds are converted ; not raging and cutting off in wrath, but "speaking the truth in love." Let every religious and charitable institution be purged of this virus, and its whole policy be directed against Slavery.

Let our whole system of education be arrayed on the side of freedom. If the south sends her sons and daughters to our schools, let them learn that knowledge is here regarded the handmaid of humanity. Let all magazines, journals, books, that pander to the Slave Power, be regenerated or remanded to the sole use of their masters. Let it become a disgrace for a cultivated man to sneer at Liberty, and our northern literature and art be won over to reverence for man. Let the theater give us plays on Freedom, and the concerts heroic songs of Liberty ; and let music, painting, sculpture, architecture and public spectacles be won over to this side.

Let society be organized in every northern city and village, on the basis of human rights ; and every man and woman be made to feel that no wealth, or grace, or position can atone for infidelity to mankind.

Power deemed it necessary to spend six weeks in Congress cursing it. It is not an "incendiary publication," but an irresistible argument addressed to the non-slaveholding whites of the Southern States. Could every such person read and comprehend it, Slavery would be a doomed institution.

Let the superiorities of free labor be demonstrated in every way, and organized emigration overflow every territory and state, peaceably working out the great problem of scientific industry against servile toil. Thus, in time can our godless commerce be walled in, and shamed into reverence for the free institutions she now too often would undermine for accursed lust of gold.

Let every man in the place and profession where God has set him, toil to fill his soul and his position with love for true Liberty. Thus, slowly but inevitably shall we make every northern institution an ally of the true republic ; and society itself will become a great wall of granite, against the practical encroachments of the slave oligarchy.

This peaceful and practical reform will make every northern Christian, every northern institution, a missionary to the Slave Power. It will also raise up a noble host in the South who will assert the right of free discussion and assail despotism on its own ground. Thus shall we be prepared for that large exercise of Christian statesmanship that will finally adjust the forces of the republic. That statesmanship must begin in the deliverance of the free states from the power of Slavery. Let the Slave Power understand that no further aggressions will be submitted to ; no new indignities endured. Then let the united party of freedom take possession of the general government ; granting to the Slave Power all its constitutional rights ; but interpreting and administering the Constitution for Liberty as it now is interpreted and administered for despotism. Let that government take the sword out of the hands of the southern and northern destructive and wield it only in the sacred interest of Justice and Liberty. Let the infamous Fugitive Slave Law be repealed, and the constitutional duty to return fugitives from service to their employers be remanded to the several states, each commonwealth to decide who does owe service by a jury of freemen. Let there be no more slave states. Though every hair of the Slave Power stand on end with disunion, let the

gate be locked against Satan forevermore. Let every inch of territory be consecrated to freedom, and whatever new empires Providence may commit to our charge be pledged to Liberty forever. Let the Supreme Court of the United States be remodeled till it represents man and not the auction block. Let all fillibustering and slave trading be suppressed by the strong arm of the law ; and every revolting slave state be affectionately embraced within the restraining arms of a determined government.

Then let the government of the United States say to the Slave Power : “ *We* hold the sword of order only to be drawn in the sacred interest of freedom. We shall hold it to prevent you from carrying off any of the states of the Union into a slave empire, for that would doom your slaves and servile whites to perpetual bondage. We shall hold it to suppress all border ruffianism, fillibustering, mail-robbing, mobocracy, slave-trading. We shall hold it to prevent a northern invasion or slave insurrection ; for civil and servile war are neither a Christian nor a statesmanlike cure for our national ills. Thus confined within your present bounds, we leave you to the inevitable operation of that spirit of Christian progress which will compel you to adjust your state of society to the advancing civilization of your age. We will respect and protect you in the exercise of the right to deal with an evil which the present generation inherited from the sin of the past. You shall have the time, under a just administration of the government, to work out this fearful problem on your own ground, by your own best wisdom and religion, aided by the sympathy and advice of civilized mankind. If this seems to you an oppression, remember that despotism has no natural rights on earth that any man is bound to respect ; and that it is only by God’s grace and the forbearance of Christian civilization giving you space to repent, and trying to save your people altogether, that you endure another hour. For America must be free, and Slavery must disappear.”

I know there is no political party, no Christian sect, no northern state, as a whole, yet fully up to this ; but the Christian sentiment of the country will finally bring us all to this conclusion ; and ere another twenty-five years, no party, church or community in the north, no progressive man in the south, will dare to support despotism—but the only rivalry will be in fidelity to the rights of human nature.

But what will Herod be about while Jesus is thus building around him a celestial wall of Liberty ? Of course, Herod in America will do what he did in Judea ; for despotism “never learns nor forgets anything.” When Jesus came, Herod cried out : “It is John whom I beheaded ; he is risen from the dead.” Just so blind is the Slave Power to-day, to the distinction between the destructive who would grasp the sword of extermination, and the Christian who would save all to freedom. One thing the Slave Power is beginning to feel ; that it is doomed. It knows it *ought* to die ; it feels itself an enemy to God and man, and the best civilization of the age. For the time, it seeks to conceal its mortal terror under a show of ruffianism and bombastic defiance of the world, and, like Milton’s Satan, impiously chooses evil for good, and says : “Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.” But, in these latter times, it has fallen upon a dismal suspicion, that its days are numbered. Its long guilty career of falsehood, oppression, murder and blasphemy, has filled its soul with strange and awful forebodings ; and in the midst of its insane boasts and maddest plans, it inwardly quakes like the aspen leaf. It suspects it must die. It can conceive of only one way of demise—through blood and wrath from the humanity it has so long oppressed.

It fears the slave—not because the slave is warlike or will rise—but because it has so outraged him. It fears the free negro—not for his actual hostility—but because it has so terribly wronged him, and drives him out from its borders or makes him a slave. It fears its own white, laboring men, and banishes a Helper or an Underwood—not because they are

incendiaries—but because it has so trampled on the rights of its plebeian white caste. And it fears the North—not because the North, or any state, or any large number of men ever did, or do now propose invasion or insurrection—but because it has insulted and injured the North past endurance. Our own calm and patient spirit, has encouraged it to bluster and pretend that we are cowards; but it knows, that if the deep, cool soul of our eighteen millions were once stirred on the farms, and in the shops and homes, and upon the decks of this great North, it would wither like the grass before an arctic frost. Yet it takes counsel of its fears and ambition, and plunges against our cold and passive patience.

But when John Brown appeared at Harper's Ferry, the Slave Power thought its day of doom was come. It saw in his stern face the frown of God, and burst into a frenzy through its fifteen states; and now is raving in all the tumult of preparation for a great conflict with the sword. It has done by him only what it could do. It sees now only that one man. It knows no difference between the Christian and the Hebrew; the sword and the baptism of love. It cannot see that the Christian freemen of the country do not propose to slay one man, to deprive the South of one just right, to do one unkind or violent thing, but only to save the people of fifteen states from their worst foe, and save the nation from ruin. It does see that the Christian sentiment of America intends to destroy Slavery; and it knows but one mode of its destruction.

So when the northern mother prays among her children for the slave; and the minister preaches the Gospel of Freedom; and the child gives the fugitive a loaf of bread and cup of water for Christ's dear sake; and the statesman unfolds his policy for Liberty and Union; and the philanthropist pleads for human nature, the Slave Power shrieks: "*It is John whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead!*" It burst forth into volleys of rage against every man and woman who will not be its slave, and gnashes its teeth against them,

demanding their blood; driving them from the Southern States, arresting them for free speech, threatening everything insane and wicked; hiring renegade editors to call our best men traitors, and write obscene things about our noblest women; and generally acting as Macbeth behaved when the ghost of Banquo rose at the feast of his guilty power.

All this is to be expected, and must be patiently endured. Let not this torrent of despotic invective be responded to by servile Union meetings, that forget Liberty to remember merchandise, or by frantic disclaimers of imaginary crimes. I am sorry any man has stooped to defend himself against the puerile and insane charges of the Slave Power, and the Satanic press, during these latter months of its carnival. Let there be no more explanations to the Slave Power; but let us all say to the people of the Southern States: "Brethren and sisters, let not your tyrant deceive you. This great rising spirit of freedom that is resounding through our vast areas like the coming up of the north wind over the stormy sea, is not John whom you beheaded, rising from the dead. We have taken John's body from the bloody hands of the Slave Power, and laid it in its grave among the mighty Adirondacks, and his spirit is in the hands of God. But his Gospel is the old Gospel of wrath that is passing away; our Gospel is the good news of love that Christ has brought in. We intend to destroy the Slave Power and save you from it, and save the Union, too, from sin and shame. And lest John should rise and cut us off in the midst of our sins, we intend to place the sword safe under the ægis of the law, and never, while you are true to your citizenship, will it flash ruin through your borders. We shall hold it to prevent the Slave Power from dissolving the Union, or further assailing our liberties; but the weapon with which we shall uproot despotism, will be one of which it will know too little until it feels it in its bones and blood; all penetrating as the air, irresistible as the light; the power of Christian freedom and.

love, illuminating your souls and changing your civilization from murky darkness to shining day."

Against that weapon of a Christianized public sentiment, inspiring men, shaping institutions, pouring in everywhere like the water and the air, the mightiest powers of earth must strive in vain. How small looked Jesus, hanging on the cross, to those who represented the authority and held the heavy sword of the Roman despotism ; and yet, how did his truth penetrate, like subtle fire, into every joint of that mighty fabric of tyranny, slowly dissolving it into fragments and moulding the states of modern society. Just so is Jesus fighting for the truth in America. Herod can kill John, can kill you and me, and a thousand like us ; but can he kill the glorious spirit of freedom in millions of lofty souls ? Already is the Slave Power alarmed and aroused by the encroachments of that spirit, so intangible and yet so irresistible. It never yet understood how it lost Kansas. It seized the ballot box, subdued the friends of freedom, erected an usurped government over them, slew scores of men, burned, banished, held for a time all the approaches to the territory. It re-enforced its own power by the whole weight of the government of the United States, and yet, spite of all, it was beaten, and an empire glided from its grasp as by magic. It was the first great conflict in which the northern brain has been pitted against the bullet of the Slave Power. Our weapon was the best, and we thought Kansas out of their hands.

There is sometimes represented on the stage a wonderful pantomime, in which a supernatural knight, bearing a magic sword, is commissioned to foil and destroy the great *roue* and bully of a kingdom. The bravo seeks out and defies his strange, silent foe and slays him in single combat. He sinks into the earth only to rise behind his back ; falls again only to spring up fresh and calm. Every where the ghost-knight haunts his burly enemy. Wherever the spectre appears, the powers of nature turn against the sinner. In his own kitchen the game and meats spring up alive ; in the forest he is

mocked by a flitting beauty who vanishes on being pursued, or when caught turns to the statue of one of his murdered enemies ; in the graveyard the effigies on the tombs wave their ghastly hands ; in his midnight orgies the marble forms of his victims enter and confront him. He shoots the mysterious stranger, but the bullet is caught and tossed back to his feet ; till worn out and maddened by the never-ending, still beginning contest with a supernatural power, he curses his God, and is carried off by demons to his reward.

I sat one night at the play and saw this grotesque and awful pantomime ; and as I looked the stage expanded to a continent, and I beheld only the great conflict between freedom and despotism. I saw the Slave Power, as in my youth, mob the abolitionists, and put a gag in the mouth of the Congressmen, and rob the mails, only to set every man talking, and make the national capitol a great debating society on Slavery, and the post-office the express of freedom. I saw it drive us into a Mexican war, and gain an imperial territory which turned to ashes in its hand, only giving it three slave votes in Congress, with a score of commonwealths in reserve for us. Then I beheld it enact the Fugitive Law, to catch a few runaways ; and lo ! the whole country was mined by the underground railroad, with its station on every plantation, and a nation of freemen growing up across the line. I saw it break the compact that might have given it half a dozen slave states, only to lose all it fought for, and create the organized emigration that will defeat it in every future territory. I looked on as it half slew a Senator for one speech of two hours ; and behold ! the whole North swarmed with orators cursing it in countless tongues. I read its bulletin of a Dred Scott decision, only to learn to interpret the Constitution for freedom, and arouse the people's judiciary of every free state. I saw it set up John Brown's gallows ; which, much as I abhor the shedding of blood, I fear the North will never take down, but keep to hang every Slave Governor or Senator who draws a sword against the state.

I see the shadow of that gallows already creeping towards more than one great man. I saw it open the slave trade, and organize its fillibustering hordes, only to turn against itself the moral sentiment of the whole civilized earth. So must it be. The Slave Power has gained a hundred victories since I was a child, and not one has given it any real increase of power; the country is freer; we are marching with a more resistless pace towards Liberty than ever before.

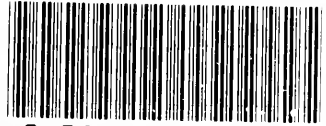
No wonder the Slave Power is driven to insanity. Baffled as by spirits at every turn; losing every conquest; its oldest state invaded by free emigration; its newest rising into a free republic, what can it do but fly to arms, and spend the money with which it ought to educate its people, to buy Sharp's rifles and revolvers at Hartford and Springfield, and cocked hats and gold lace in New York, to shoot—whom? Does it want more of our blood? We have ten thousand men, women and children, who will go to the scaffold if need be, as cheerfully as martyrs ever went to the stake. What then? Can it hang our literature? Can it bayonet our school? Can it manacle our busy hand? Can it set a police over our growing corn, and wheat, and grass? Can it shoot our immortal souls? Can it fight duels with the eloquence that peals through a thousand churches? Can it gibbet the prayers of four millions slaves that storm the throne of God, and day and night cry out: "How long, oh, Lord! how long?" Can it empty its rail cars and hotels of thoughts of freedom? Lo! they are burning in a million hearts within its own homes; they are dividing its own soul in twain!

Vain is the struggle against inevitable Justice. The Slave Power is doomed. If the party of freedom is wise and strong as the emergency demands, no state will shoulder arms to march out of the Union, no raging armies will follow a Quixotic Virginia Governor to the siege of the Capital. Liberty will be triumphant by the voice of the people and enfold the Slave Power and all its fretful humors with a wall of implacable justice and fraternal love, and set the intellect and

the conscience of the Christian world to catechise and warn and illuminate and labor with it for half a century. And God's will must be done in the regeneration of the country and the triumph of man.

Men and women of America! that is the battle you are called to fight. For a few years more it is left for us to choose whether we will subdue Herod by the gospel of John or Jesus. Shall the good and right-minded now unite peaceably to stop this guilty career of folly and crime, or shall we still go on, blundering and blind, till complication gets worse confounded, and God sends forth the spirit of war and ruin to scourge the land? For the republic must be redeemed from this threatening despotism. Shall we now combine, and in wisdom, moderation, love, save the whole; or shall we contend and divide till half has fallen off to unite with barbarous Mexico for a great slave empire; or state is hurled against state in the horrors of civil discord and servile anarchy? Choose speedily whom you will have to do this work, for already the hours rush on to the consummation, and we may not long be left to any choice. Who shall it be? Herod, brandishing the slave whip over a fallen empire; John risen from the dead, raging like a Nemesis from ocean to ocean; or Jesus, rising upon the continent in a sunshine of order and justice, and liberty, and fraternal love?

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